

# **Sierra Front - Northwest Great Basin Resource Advisory Council**

**January 25 - 26, 2001**

**DRAFT**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**BLM Nevada State Office**

**1340 Financial Blvd.**

**Reno, NV**

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## Attendance

Council Member	Representing	Thursday, 1/25	Friday, 1/26
Susie Askew	Wild Horses & Burros	X (PM)	X (AM)
Gerry Emm	Native Americans	X (PM)	X
Hugh Judd	Wildlife	X	X
Robert (Bob) Kautz	Archeological	X	X
William (Bill) Roullier	Transportation/Rights-of-Way	X	X
Sherm Swanson	Academic	X	X (AM)
Tina Nappe (Vice Chair)	Environmental	X	X
Jacques Etchegoyhen (Chair)	Elected Official	X	X
Larie Trippet	Public-at-Large	X	X
Jerry Hepworth	Energy/Minerals	X	X
Mark Farman	State Agency		X
John Falen	Livestock	X	X
Tebeau Piquet	Mining	X	X
Karen Boeger	Recreation	X	X
Bennie Romero	Livestock		

## Summary of Motions

1. Accept the minutes from the December 4, 2000 meeting as written.
2. The Sierra Front - Northwestern Great Basin RAC supports the ranking of Round 2 acquisition properties as depicted in the *Round 2 Preliminary Recommendation* document within the jurisdiction of the RAC.
3. Ask BLM to consider placing the Black Rock - High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trail NCA under the jurisdiction of a single management unit.

4. The Sierra Front - Northwestern Great Basin RAC supports working with the Forest Service in developing a comprehensive RAC as feasible.

### **Summary of Action Assignments**

1. A commitment was made by the Winnemucca Field Manager to provide the RAC membership with the private land acreage within the Black Rock Desert - High Rock Lake Emigrant Trail NCA and the 10 wilderness areas.
2. The Winnemucca Field Manager agreed to provide each RAC member a copy of the large map depicting the Black Rock Desert - High Rock Lake Emigrant Trail NCA and the 10 wilderness areas.
3. The SNPLMA Project Manager will provide the RAC membership with a list of properties purchased to date using monies from the SNPLMA.
4. The Winnemucca and Carson City Field Managers will provide the RAC membership with a consolidated listing of all land ownership transactions (exchanges, sales, etc.) being undertaken and/or considered by the two field offices.
5. The Carson City Field Manager, working with the Ely Field Manager, will obtain copies of draft County ordinances associated with OHV use being limited to existing roads and trails.

### **Quote of the Meeting**

“If you’re not going to think BIG, send me a memo” - Jacques Etchegoyhen

### **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

A motion was passed unanimously to accept the December 4, 2000 meeting minutes as written.

### **Field Office Overview Reports**

Refer to Attachments 1 and 2 for a written summary of the presentations by the Winnemucca and Carson City Field Managers.

A summary of the questions and answers generated by the Field Manager Overview presentations is depicted in Attachment 3.

## Education Subcommittee Report

The education subcommittee (Committee) met on January 18<sup>th</sup> with Karen Boeger, Donna Potter, Chris Freeman, Les Boni (BLM), Mike Bilbo (BLM) and Mark Struble (BLM) in attendance. Committee members which did not attend the meeting were Karen and Laura Wells (reason for absence unknown), Carol Vance and Susan Lynne both of whom were absent due to illness. The primary focus of the Committee was to (1) review current efforts to educate the public as to appropriate uses of the public lands and (2) develop recommendations for consideration by the RAC.

A summary of the discussions and recommendations from the meeting are outlined in Attachment 4.

One item not addressed in Attachment 4 which was believed important was use of Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) as a measurement tool documenting change in impacts. Use of control areas or measuring plots to monitor trend over the long term was also discussed as a potential measuring tool.



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It was noted some of the suggestions and recommendations from Attachment 4 could be implemented immediately while others would need to be addressed in BLM's planning process. A concern was expressed that measurement of the change in the number of roads and in the amount of vandalism was not addressed in the Committee's discussion. Hunter education was one area which should receive initial focus.

A concern was expressed that the public may have an incorrect impression that an effort is underway to remove all ATV use from public lands. This statement generated substantial discussion between RAC members concerning the increase in OHV use and impacts to public lands within Nevada.

It was agreed the Education subcommittee should continue its efforts.

## Carson City Field Office Plan Amendments

BLM received \$19 million nationwide to update its land use plans which are used to guide and direct management of the public lands. Specific to Nevada BLM, Fiscal Year 2001 funding was sufficient to initiate the Winnemucca Resource Management Plan effort but not the planning efforts within the Carson City Field Office.

The Carson City Field Office is undertaking a number of planning efforts as outlined on Attachment 5 entitled *BLM Land Use Planning Activities, Carson City Field Office* dated 1/23/01. An overview

of each project was provided. Although sufficient BLM funding was not received in FY01, the Carson City Field Office will continue working with various partners on many of the initiatives. John Singlaub distributed and referenced the *Final Southern Washoe County Urban Interface Plan Amendment* (Attachment 6) which is scheduled for release to the public within the next couple of weeks.

The Carson City Field Office is not proposing to undertake a single, large planning effort as such an effort is believed to limit the input of local/county governments and the public. Experience has demonstrated a single large planning effort is not as successful as compared to several smaller efforts in situations involving several different local jurisdictions.

The RAC participated in substantial discussion addressing conservation easements, their benefits, long-term impacts of conservation easements, our inability to comprehend future situations, etc. It was agreed the question of ownership or who would “hold” the easement will be a question to be addressed statewide in the future.

### **Knott Creek Grazing Allotment**

Sherm Swanson provided a brief overview of his reasons for proposing the RAC’s involvement in the Knott Creek allotment evaluation. In summary, involvement in the allotment evaluation process will allow the RAC to address management of a tract of public land small enough to gain a good understanding of the evaluation process but large enough to contain many of the issues being addressed by federal land management agencies. The Knott Creek allotment would expose the RAC to the cheatgrass/fire cycle, accumulation of woody material, riparian issues, wildlife issues, noxious weeds, and habitat issues for sage grouse as well as many other sage brush dependent species.



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This project would involve an overview of the allotment and the draft evaluation during this meeting. Follow up discussions during the RAC’s April meeting would be followed by a field trip and discussions during the RAC’s July meeting. This is considered the minimum time needed to understand and address this project.

A question as to the purpose of the RAC’s participation in this project was raised. Some members were willing to commit the time necessary from an educational standpoint to learn the complexity of developing management strategies for the public lands. Another benefit would be an understanding of the process used by BLM to evaluate the success of management in achieving the Standards & Guidelines. After discussion, the RAC agreed to undertake the Knott Creek grazing allotment project as proposed.

Gene Seidlitz, Supervisory Rangeland Management Specialist from the Winnemucca Field Office, provided a brief description of the allotment evaluation process. The evaluation process is an interdisciplinary effort designed to evaluate the success of management strategies in achieving the allotment's objectives. The process involves consolidating, analyzing and presenting resource monitoring data collected over a several year period.

Shane Findlay, Rangeland Management Specialist from the Winnemucca Field Office, provided an overview of the *Draft Knott Creek Allotment Evaluation* document (Attachment 7). The RAC was asked not to distribute the draft document to other members of the public. The document is considered an "internal" working document which should not be made available to the public until officially released later in the year.

Richard Drake addressed the RAC indicating the Drake family views the allotment evaluation process as the best opportunity to determine the "best and highest use" of the public land within the allotment. If it is determined that a use other than livestock grazing is considered the "highest and best use", they would honor that decision. They welcome the opportunity to participate in this process.

The question was raised as to whether other members of the public such as the Nevada Department of Wildlife should be involved in this allotment evaluation. After discussion, the RAC did not come to a recommendation or consensus as to involvement of other public entities in the process.

It was agreed Sherm Swanson would work with the Winnemucca Field Office staff to develop a presentation for the April RAC meeting.

### **General Public Comment Period - Thursday, January 25<sup>th</sup>**

The Knott Creek Allotment Evaluation presentation was halted at 3 PM to determine if there were members of the public interested in making a public comment. Recognizing no interest was expressed, the Knott Creek presentation was continued.

### **Black Rock Management Plan/Black Rock Desert - High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trail National Conservation Area/Winnemucca Resource Management Plan**

NCA legislation is available via the Internet at the following address:  
<http://thomas.loc.gov/bss/d106query.html>

After a brief presentation addressing the following items, a question and answer session took place. A summary of the question/answer interchange is provided in Attachment 8.

- History of the NCA legislation
- BLM's recent efforts to address development of the required planning and management

- documents for the NCA and the wilderness units
- Actions needed to identify the NCA and wilderness boundaries on-the-ground
- Actions needed to meet reporting requirements to Congress

BLM has begun initiate efforts toward development of planning and management direction for the NCA. A 2-day internal BLM meeting was held in Winnemucca to discuss and develop a list of actions (immediate, short and long-term) necessary to implement management on the ten new wilderness units. An important action will be providing a detailed description of the NCA and wilderness boundaries to Congress. As part of that process, the boundaries will be located using the Global Positioning System (GPS) to serve as the official record. When this information is consolidated and ready for submission to Congress will be dependent on funding.

On Monday, January 29<sup>th</sup>, there will be a meeting between BLM California and Nevada to outline roles, responsibilities, and strategies for developing management for the NCA. One issue to be addressed is incorporation of the NCA and wilderness designations into the land use planning efforts currently proposed by the Winnemucca and Cederville Field Offices.

Regardless of the approach used, key to the success of the effort will be the active involvement of the public. Opportunities to use state and local governments, citizens advisory groups, etc., will be explored. It was mentioned that the Governor is considering establishment of a citizens group which would be augmented by state staff. This group would be involved in developing management strategies for the NCA.

One concern which has been identified is the lack of Wilderness Study Area (WSA) release language in the enabling legislation. This omission has left small areas in WSA status which must continue to be managed under the agency's Interim Management Plan.

The enabling legislation was passed after the agency's appropriation Act was approved; therefore, at the current time, there is little funding formally designated for implementation actions. Requests are being made for appropriate funding and an internal review of the existing appropriations is being completed. The degree of implementation will be dependent on the funding received.

It was suggested Steve Smith, BLM's State Wilderness Coordinator, should conduct a short mini-wilderness workshop similar to those conducted internally within the agency for the RAC.

A 11x17-inch map (Attachment 9) of the NCA and wilderness units was provided to each RAC member.

A suggestion was made to have the Winnemucca Field Office send each RAC member the following documents for their review and information.

- BLM Arizona guidelines as they apply to grazing in wilderness areas
- 1964 Wilderness Act
- BLM's most current wilderness regulations and handbook

It was agreed to circulate a sign up sheet on which each member could designate those documents which they would like to receive. Unfortunately, the sign-up sheet was not circulated during the meeting.

Towards the end of the 2-day meeting, the RAC unanimously passed the following motion by a voice vote:

“Ask BLM to consider placing the Black Rock - High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trail NCA under the jurisdiction of a single management unit.”

### **Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA)**



**SNPLMA Project Manager Mike Dwyer**

Mike Dwyer, BLM's Project Manager for implementation of the SNPLMA, provided an overview of the SNPLMA and the requirements for expenditure of the monies received from sale of public lands under the Act. In addition, Mr. Dwyer provided an overview of Attachments 10, 11, 12 & 13.

A suggestion was made to develop a matrix addressing the ranking criteria and the four strategic goals.

Mr. Dwyer welcomed the RAC to provide input they believed important concerning the parcels identified in Attachment 13 for Round 2 acquisitions. Comments relating to improvement or modification of the entire process would also be welcome.

The following are thoughts offered during the discussion:

- Split Criteria 5 of the ranking criteria (Attachment 11) separating manageability and efficiency from imminent or planned property development.
- Riparian values should receive the same level of consideration as specially designated species (Criteria 1 on Attachment 11).
- Concern was expressed with the perception generated by identification of two different sets of valuing criteria.
- Concern was expressed with the periodic shuffling of the acquisition list. For some properties, the time required for the process may create a situation where an opportunity to purchase that



property may be lost. The process is continuing being modified in attempts to shorten the time between nomination and approval to purchase.

- It is important the goals of each federal agency be reflected in the *FY2001 Strategic Goals for Land Acquisitions* (Attachment 12) document.
- A suggestion was made to identify the acquisition acreage by parcel when providing information to the new Secretary of the Interior.
- Shortening the public comment periods may be one method of shortening the process.
- A member of the RAC indicated the Nevada Association of Counties had previously passed a resolution supporting purchase of conservation easements with the Act monies. The member was disappointed to see many of the conservation easements received a lower priority based on the ranking criteria.

A request was made to obtain a list of properties which have been acquired using monies from the SNPLMA.

The following motion was made, seconded and passed with one objection by a voice vote.

The Sierra Front - Northwestern Great Basin RAC supports the ranking of Round 2 acquisition properties as depicted in the *Round 2 Preliminary Recommendation* document within the jurisdiction of the RAC.

The RAC expressed their appreciation for the professionalism with which the entire Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act process has been conducted.

One member of the RAC expressed concern with the significant amount of money being generated through this Act that there is a possibility the federal government would eventually have the capability to purchase all private land within Nevada. It was suggested the RAC needs to be aware of this possibility and prevent such a situation from occurring. In response, it was indicated there are also opportunities for the federal government to transfer public lands into private ownership. As part of this discussion, the RAC requested they be provided with a summary of all land ownership transactions (exchanges, sales, etc.) being undertaken and/or considered by the Winnemucca and Carson City Field Offices.

### **Off-Highway Vehicle Use**

Gene Kolkman, Field Manager for BLM's Ely Field Office described a fundamental ethic in Wyoming by which a person on a Off-Highway Vehicle stayed on existing roads & trails unless unusual circumstances required getting off. In the Ely area, this ethic is not a normal or accepted practice. The proliferation of roads and trails in many areas is reaching critical proportions.

If there is a "community based" effort to develop such an ethic within the State of Nevada, there could be a significant reduction of the creation of number of new roads and trails. If such an approach

addressed three criteria (involves the people who use the public lands, protects the natural resources and provides access to the public lands), it should gain a broad base of support.

Currently, there are several different approaches being used to raise attention to this issue. Examples include establishment of citizen-based groups working cooperatively with the governmental agencies to develop management strategies; establishment of County ordinances; development of guidelines by BLM Resource Advisory Councils; development of policies by several different jurisdictions (local, state and federal) which would be endorsed and implemented by those different jurisdictions; and development of threshold levels and appropriate monitoring to determine when such threshold levels are reached.

It was noted there has been a history of increasing restrictions for the use of public lands. A concern was expressed that such an initiative may be viewed by many as a precursor to placing more restrictions on the use of the public lands.

A question relating to opportunities for educating the public on this issue was asked. Such opportunities could include viewing this issue as a “community” issue, not a government issue or having racing sponsors who can reach the masses who use OHVs to release public service announcements promoting staying on existing roads and trails. Equally important to the success of developing solutions is “how” the public is approached.

It was agreed copies of draft County ordinances being considered around the state should be obtained and to address this issue at the April RAC meeting after the field trip to the Pine Nuts Mountains.

### **Sierra Pacific EIS Scoping Process**

Bill Roullier opened this topic with an explanation that the Sierra Pacific Power Company is proposing to develop a long-term (5- or 10-year) strategy outlining future utility needs for the Carson City/Washoe County area. It is anticipated the strategy will require an EIS to analyze anticipated facility needs (transmission lines, facilities, gas lines, etc.). The outcome of this effort is expected to either supplement or replace the existing Regional Corridor Plan.

Sierra Pacific approached BLM Carson City with a single project for a power transmission line from Tracy to Sugar Loaf; however, withdrew its application based on the need to develop a regional study which would project utility needs for the next 5 to 10 years.

Mr. Roullier was interested in obtaining advice from the RAC as to methods for involving the public in the scoping process for this project. What are ideas for actively involving the public? How extensive of a project description should be proposed by Sierra Pacific? Would it be beneficial to display several alternatives for different facilities? What criteria should be given to the public to assist them in determining the appropriateness of decisions? If focus groups are used, would the RAC recommend one large focus group, several smaller geographically based groups, or a citizen advisory group? What criteria should Sierra Pacific consider or use when developing the EIS?

Much of the subsequent discussion centered on how Sierra Pacific should approach development of the long-term proposal. Issues suggested for consideration were conservation of natural areas, current energy consumption, and application of existing and future energy conservation measures. It was suggested to consult or involve key people and/or groups (focus groups, citizen advisory group, etc.) working with technically knowledgeable individuals to develop a proposal or range of alternatives which could be taken before the public.

### **Forest Service RAC Mandate**

Bob Vaught, Forest Supervisor for the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest addressed the RAC concerning the possibility of the RAC providing advice and guidance to the Forest Service on specific issues. The Forest Service has been instructed by Congress to establish a RAC process. BLM's Nevada State Director has been working with Mr. Vaught concerning the possibility of using BLM's RACs to fulfill the Forest Service's commitment.

The Forest Service has been involved for several years with Resource Advisory Councils in the Pacific Northwest addressing the spotted owl issue. The recent legislation require the Forest Service to establish RACs to provide recommendations for forest plan revisions. Humboldt - Toiyabe plan was approved in 1988 and needs to be revised in the next couple of years.

Mr. Vaught provided an overview of the "Payments to the States" legislation which was signed in October 2000. A summary of this legislation was provided to the RAC (Attachment 14). The purpose of the Act was to stabilize payments to the states. Twenty-five percent of receipts are paid by the Forest Service to states which, in turn, reimburse the Counties. These monies are to be used principally for roads and schools. Over the past several years, payments have been declining especially in states with a large forest system.



**Forest Supervisor Bob Vaught**

Counties which receive over \$100,000 in receipts annually have three options for expenditure of the monies. Option 1 would allocate a minimum of 15 to 20 percent to stewardship projects (ecosystem enhancement projects, wildlife enhancement projects, etc.) which must be recommended by the RAC. Option 2 allows the County to utilize the monies for emergency services. Option 3 would be to return the monies to Treasury. Options 2 and 3 would not require involvement by the RAC. Counties receiving less than \$100,000 in receipts may voluntarily participate in this program. One Nevada county (Nye) receives receipts exceeding \$100,000 annually.

Mr. Vaught indicated that he would not expect the RAC to expend more time or energy to address Forest Service topics separately. He would work closely with BLM to structure agendas to focus toward the most critical issues for both agencies.

After a lengthy discussion, the RAC unanimously passed the following motion by voice vote:

“The Sierra Front - Northwestern Great Basin RAC supports working with the Forest Service in developing a comprehensive RAC as feasible.”

BLM State Director Bob Abbey briefly addressed the RAC indicating there are many commonalities between BLM and the Forest Service. This is a great opportunity to form an alliance within Nevada to bring common sense back into management of the resources. The other BLM Nevada RACs are supportive of a joint FS/BLM RAC. BLM Nevada is willing to make modifications to the RAC charters as necessary.

### **April 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> RAC Meeting**

It was agreed the April RAC meeting will held in Carson City. The agenda should consider the following issues.

1. Pine Nuts management plan (field trip, recommendations addressing the proliferation of new roads and trails)
2. Knott Creek allotment evaluation
3. Sagebrush/sage grouse ecology with presentations
4. Wilderness mini-workshop
5. Update on the SNPLMA acquisition status

A motion was passed at approximately 3 PM to adjourn the meeting.

## Summary of Attachments<sup>1</sup>

Attachment	Title	# of Pages
1	Winnemucca Field Office Overview	3
2	Carson City Overview	3
3	Summary of Questions/Answers Generated by the Field Office Overview Presentations	3
4	Education Subcommittee Meeting Report dated 1/18/2000	9
5	BLM Land Use Planning Activities: Carson City Field Office dated 1/23/2001	2
6	Final Southern Washoe County Urban Interface Plan Amendment dated January 2001	59
7	Draft Knott Creek Allotment Evaluation	102
8	Summary of Questions/Answers Generated by the NCA/Black Rock Management Plan/RMP Discussion	3
9	11"x17" Map of the Black Rock Desert - High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trail NCA and 10 Wilderness Areas	1
10	Process Flow Chart: Allocation of the Special Account	1
11	Ranking Criteria	1
12	FY2001 Strategic Goals for Land Acquisitions	5
13	Round 2 Preliminary Recommendation dated December 2000	15
14	Secure Payments for Counties	4

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<sup>1</sup> Attachments are not attached to the electronic version of these minutes. Copies may be obtain from the Winnemucca Field Office by request.